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PEOPLES TEMPLE CHRISTIAN CHURCH SUPPORTS FIRST AMENDMENT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

... Mr. Speaker, I was recently made aware of the fact that the congregation of the Peoples Temple Christian Church of Redwood Valley, Calif., has donated a total of $4,400 for the defense of William Farr and other reporters jailed for refusing to reveal their sources of information. I would like to commend the Rev. James W. Jones, who is pastor of the church, and every member of his congregation for this outstanding demonstration of their commitment to the principles on which this country was founded.

I would like to include in the RECORD at this point a few items which appeared in the press recently about Peoples Temple. The first is an article from the IAPA News, which is published bimonthly by the Inter American Press Association. This item appeared in the February-March edition, and reads as follows:

CHURCH DONATION AIDS FIGHT FOR PRESS FREEDOM

The Inter American Press Association, we all know, operates strictly on dues paid by members and does not solicit outside contributons for its main task of defending and promoting freedom of information in the Americas. Recently, however, we received an unsolicited contribution that moved us deeply. We accepted it with gratitude and full apppreciation of the high principles that moved the donors.

The donation of $250 came from the congregation of the Peoples Temple Christian Church, of Redwood Valley, California, whose pastor, the Reverend James W. Jones, has sparked a campaign in defense of the First Amendment to the constitution.

"We believe," wrote James R. Pugh, in behalf of the Board of Elders, "that the American way of life is being threatened by the recent jailings of news reporters for refusal to reveal their sources. As a church, we feel a responsibility to defend the free speech clause of the First Amendment, for without it America will have lost freedom of conscience and the climate will become ripe for totalitarianism."

The elders voted the donation after hearing the Rev. Jones read "to an overflow congregation" excerpts from a report on the state of the press in the U.S. made by Brady Black, editor of the Cincinnati Enquirer, and regional vice chairman of the IAPA's Committee on Freedom of the Press, at the IAPA's annual meeting last October in Chile. Mr. Black," the covering letter said, "gave a lucid and convincing account of developments in our country constituting a threat to the people's right to know." The letter was addressed to Francis Dale, Publisher of The Enquirer.

Mr. Pugh reported that a grand total of $4,400 had been contributed by the congregation, made up of "ordinary working people of all backgrounds," for the defense of William Farr and other reporters jailed for refusing to reveal their sources of information.

"No acknowledgement for this contribution is necessary," wrote Mr. Pugh. "We wish simply to demonstrate . . . that there are churches and other groups in society which are not connected with the institutional press who do indeed care about this threat to freedom of speech, press and conscience."

He said the donation was "to be used as you see fit in defense of a free press."

The Peoples Temple Christian Church, under the Rev. Jones does not only take a stand on constitutional rights. The church also has established a drug rehabilitation program, two convalescent homes, a 40-acre home for mentally retarded boys, three senior citizen's homes and an animal shelter.

The next item appeared in the San Francisco Chronicle of January 17 of this year, and without further introduction, I place it in the RECORD:

A CHURCH GIVES $4,400 TO THE PRESS

Twelve newspapers—among them The Chronicle—and a newsmagazine and a television station have been awarded grants totaling $4400 by Peoples Temple Christian Church of the Disciples of Christ for use "in the defense of a free press."

Announcement of the grants was made yesterday in Ukiah, Mendocino county, by the board of trustees of the church, which has a statewide membership of more than 7500.

THEMAT

Speaking for the board, trustee James R. Pugh said:

"We believe the American way of life is being threatened by the recent jailings of news reporters for refusal to reveal their sources.

"As a church, we feel a responsibility to defend the free speech clause of the First Amendment, for without it America will have lost freedom of conscience and the climate will become ripe for totalitarianism."

Pugh said the church's pastor, the Rev. Jim Jones, had "publicly commended" The Chronicle and its "fine editorial staff" for taking a strong editorial position in defense of the First Amendment and for "the high quality of the newspaper."

"The San Francisco Chronicle has shown itself to be fair, lucid, comprehensive and courageous in confronting many issues head on," trustee Pugh said.

SOCIAL

Called less formally Peoples Temple, the church is best known and highly regarded for its social works which include housing and feeding senior citizens and medical convalescents, maintaining a home for retarded boys, rehabilitating youthful drug users, and assisting non-members as well as members of the faith through college and legal difficulties.

In accepting the grant in behalf of The Chronicle, Charles de Young Thieriot, editor and publisher, expressed his thanks to the Peoples Temple Christian Church.

Thieriot said the $500 awarded to The Chronicle will be turned over to Sigma Delta Chi, the professional journalistic society which is active in defense of freedom of the press.

And next I would like to share with our colleagues the text of a resolution which the Christian Church of Northern California-Nevada—Disciples of Christ—passed by an overwhelming margin on May 19 at their 1973 annual meeting. The resolution was offered by the First Christian Church of San Jose and won broad support from the 230 delegates attending the convention at the First Christian Church of Modesto, Calif. The delegates represented about 16,000 members from 79 congregations.

The text of the resolution follows:

Whereas, the church stands for freedom, and the free flow of information, and

Whereas, the public media, namely the press, is under increased challenge as to its exercising freedom in news and programming, as guaranteed by the First Amendment of the Constitution, and

Whereas, one of our congregations, *Peoples Temple Christian Church*, Redwood Valley, California, has made a financial contribution for use in defense of a free press as guaranteed by the First Amendment;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Christian Church of Northern California-Nevada (Disciples of Christ) meeting in its Annual Meeting May 18, 19 and 20, 1973, at First Christian Church, Modesto, California, encourage its member congregations to make their voice heard in support of a free and responsible press by either making financial contributions to insure a free and responsible press or by letting our elected officials, representatives of the communications media, and others know that we oppose any action which infringes on the First Amendment.

And be it further resolved that the Christian Church of Northern California-Nevada (Disciples of Christ), meeting in its Annual Meeting, May 18, 19 and 20, 1973 at First Christian Church, Modesto, California make known to our elected officials, representatives of communications media, and others our support of a free and responsible press and our commitment to that position and our rejection of any action which infringes on the First Amendment.

The Church Board, First Christian Church San Jose, California.

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